

Developing Cultural Resource Management in Egypt

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The Arab Republic of Egypt is the guardian of cultural resources from periods spanning tens of thousands of years. These include pre-Pharaonic archeological sites; and structures, sites, and artifacts from Dynastic Egypt, from the Greek and Roman Empires, and from the early Christian and Islamic periods. Among these cultural resources are globally-significant historic properties which record some of the most important trends, traditions, and patterns of human history.

Concern for the protection and preservation of these resources resulted in the American University in Cairo (AUC) inviting a team of American specialists to assist in developing an academic program which would provide training in cultural resource management for undergraduate and graduate students and continuing education for officials of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization (EAO), the government agency responsible for managing pre-historic and historic sites, structures, and monuments. The AUC effort was lead by Dr. Kent Weeks, Professor of Egyptology.

Our project team, who visited Egypt in May 1992, included Dr. Ricardo Elia, Director of the Office of Public Archaeology at Boston University—an archeologist with experience both in the United States and the Mediterranean area—and four National Park Service employees: Superintendents Larry Belli of Chaco Culture NHP and Gary Cummins of Petrified Forest NP, and Rogers and McManamon.

The Egyptian government formed the Egyptian Antiquities Organization in the 19th century. Yet, the management, preservation, and protection of cultural resources continues to challenge Egyptians. This is especially true today because of the population explosion and the extensive changes caused by the expansion of irrigation in the Nile valley made possible by the High Dam at Aswan.

In recent years, Egypt has attracted about 3 million international tourists a year. About a quarter of these tourists come to view and learn about cultural resources. Over all, international tourism brought Egypt \$2.2 billion per year in hard currency. The long-term protection of these resources which draw tourists to Egypt, therefore, is important for the economic well-being of the country.⁺

Our project was funded by the International Executive Service Corps (IESC), a not-for-profit organization that, since 1965, has recruited retired, highly skilled United States executives and technical advisors to share their years of experience with private businesses and public agencies in developing nations and countries entering into free market economies. (For more information about IESC, see sidebar on page 19.) Our project was somewhat unusual for IESC in that none of the experts on the team was retired.

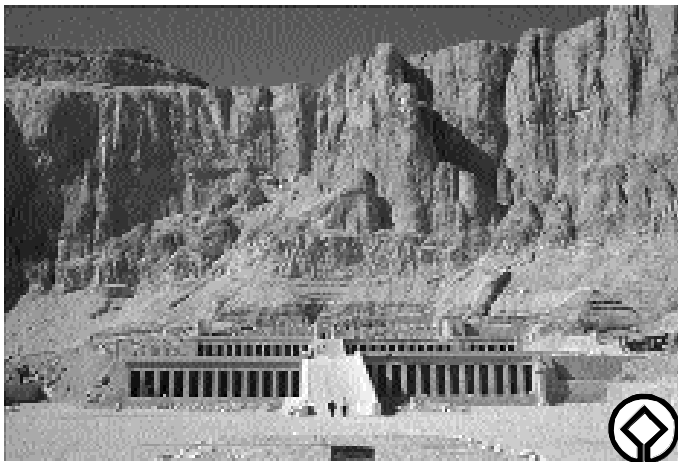
The American University in Cairo is considering the establishment of both a diploma program in specialized

aspects of cultural resource management and a degree program in archeological resource management that will complement its existing programs in Islamic art and architecture and Egyptology. The program will serve AUC students, EAO staff, and other students and professionals in the North Africa/Middle East region. Our team was to make recommendations on the form



The Sphinx and the 4,600-year-old pyramid of Chephren, Giza. Photo by Ernest Allen Connally (1963).

such training programs should take, the procedures for establishing a policy training seminar, and the specific management and preservation needs of Egyptian and regional archeological sites. To meet the goals, AUC and EAO arranged a series of site tours for our team both in the Cairo area and in Luxor, about 500 kilometers south of Cairo. We also met with the AUC staff and administrators, representatives of government ministries, and Egyptian Egyptologists and EAO Inspectors.



The Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir-el-Bahari, Thebes; c. 1490-1480 B.C. Photo by Ernest Allen Connally (1963).

In Cairo we toured the early Christian section of the city and a portion of the medieval Islamic quarter. In both sections historic structures are being lost because of the deterioration of walls caused by inadequate water and sewer drainage. Exterior decorations on buildings also are being lost because of chemical reactions caused by the poor air quality in the city. We also visited

Saqqarah, the location of the early Step Pyramid, about 10 miles south of Cairo, and Giza immediately to the west of the city, where the pyramids of Khufu (Cheops), Khafre, and Mycerinus, and the famous Sphinx, are located. Both of these areas are managed by the EAO. Both areas are important parts of a complex of ancient sites of the Pharonic period (about 3000 B.C. to 500 B.C.) known as the Memphis necropolis—a series of cemeteries, including the pyramid complexes, that stretches for 30 km along the edge of the desert just west of the Nile valley. The ancient city of Memphis with which the necropolis was associated was one of the most important places in the ancient world. It served as the capital of the country during the earliest parts of the Pharonic period and always played an important economic and administrative role in the country.

At the Saqqarah complex we found a site management pattern that was replicated at most of the sites we subsequently visited. Aside from ticket booths at the entrance to the monument areas, the typical visitor would find it difficult to detect a program of management. Most of the tourists come in large buses as part of guided private tours. The guides who lead these tours provide the interpretation at the sites and determine which areas are to be visited. The EAO provides no planned interpretation

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The International Executive Service Corps (IESC)

Based in Stanford, CT, IESC is a not-for-profit organization that recruits retired, highly skilled US executives and technical advisors to share their years of experience with businesses and public agencies in developing nations and countries entering into free market economics. Organized and directed by US executives, IESC is funded by grants from the US Agency for International Development (AID), by client contributions toward project costs, and by voluntary contributions from corporations, foundations and private sponsors in the United States and abroad.

The men and women selected by IESC work as volunteers and serve not only as advisors on short-term assignments overseas but also help implement improvements. They develop guidelines the client himself can follow in the future. Advisors assigned by IESC work to improve the performance of organizations to which they are assigned and to speed the development of trading partners for the US.

IESC has answered requests to help businesses ranging from the production of handbags to steel mills. Working in 90 different nations since its first advisors were sent abroad in 1965, IESC has successfully completed over 13,000 projects. IESC has a Skills Bank of some 12,438 experienced men and women who are ready to volunteer their expertise. In each country where IESC works, a council of local business leaders helps to evaluate the projects presented to IESC.

IESC uniquely demonstrates how the private sector and the government in this country can work together to address the problems of development overseas. The men and women who go abroad for IESC take with them a special combination of talents: skill, experience, objective service, sympathetic curiosity, and initiative. As one former client observed, "All good and experienced advisors work from the mind, but the IESC executive brings an extra

dimension—he works from the heart too." And a former Under Secretary of State remarked, "The volunteers of IESC are playing a role in the gravest long-range problem we face today—the challenge of bridging the gap between the industrialized world and developing countries."

Volunteer Executives

In a very real sense the "product" of IESC is the Volunteer Executive. Each year IESC selects over 800 men and women executives from the American business community or public agencies to share their expertise with people and countries seeking assistance. Each Volunteer Executive is selected on the basis of the specific needs of the client to whom the executive is assigned. All of the Volunteer Executives are experts in their fields; they are willing to share their know-how on a volunteer basis; most of them are recently retired; and they come from all 50 states of the US. The selected executive is encouraged to travel overseas with his or her spouse. Before leaving, the couple is briefed by IESC on the country and the client. The project generally lasts between two and three months. IESC pays for the couple's travel expenses and provides a *per diem* allowance that permits comfortable living but no salary.

Looking to the Future

While IESC is proud of its accomplishments since 1965, it realizes, in the light of economic instability in many parts of the world, that its task has just begun. IESC continues to work closely with AID and other government agencies to serve enterprises in those countries where the need is greatest. The person-to-person traditional project, where a volunteer provides advice and assistance to a single client over a two- to three-month period, remains the backbone of IESC's operations. Those interested in additional information about IESC or volunteer opportunities can write them at: International Executive Service Corps, P.O. Box 10005, Stanford, CT 06904-2005, or call at 203-967-6000.

itself at the sites except for a few small signs at the entrances to some of the tombs. This results in overcrowding at the most easily accessible portions of the sites. Visitors do not receive any standard information about the EAO, its mission, the problems of preserving the antiquities, or how tourists can help in the preservation of these resources.

Protection of the antiquities at EAO-managed areas presents another problem. The agency charged with this protection is not the EAO, but the Tourist Police. Tourist Police officers have standard white uniforms with a distinctly military appearance. Some of them tote automatic weapons which heightens this image. They report to an entirely different ministry than EAO officials. Local EAO officials told us that they have little or no control over the Tourist Police assigned to protect the areas they manage. To make matters worse, the guards are poorly paid and susceptible to bribes or payoffs by thieves or others whose actions can damage the historic sites or monuments.

After our tour of Saqqarah we visited the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx. Here, overcrowding of visitors in the monument area and uncontrolled access had been serious problems. The former remains a problem on holidays when a hundred thousand local inhabitants may

flock to the site—one of the few large park-like areas in the heavily populated vicinity. On the other hand, regular daily access has been brought under better control by instituting required entrance and exit points for vehicular traffic. Similar control of camels and horses in the monument area was also reported. As at Saqqarah, the portions of the monument area that are visited by most tourists are dictated by the individual private tour guides. At Giza, this results in relatively few tourists visiting one of

the most interesting facilities on the site, the Boat Museum. This museum contains the reassembled ancient boat found in 1954 in a sealed boat pit alongside the Pyramid of Cheops.

At Luxor, we visited the large New Kingdom temple complexes of Karnak and Luxor and the Theban Necropolis, which includes the Valley of Kings on the west side of the Nile. Here, the threat of overpowering urbanization is not a major problem, although increased tourism development on the west bank of the

Nile is likely in the near future because of a new bridge across the Nile being finished near Luxor. Currently, transportation between Luxor and the west bank is by ferry service only and there are no tourists hotels or other substantial development on the west side of the river. At the sites we inspected in the Luxor area, we observed similar problems of physical deterioration and overcrowding that we'd seen in the Cairo area.

Throughout our time in Egypt we met with AUC officials and staff, EAO Inspectors, other government representatives, and experts on Pharonic antiquities, Coptic and Islamic art and architecture. We also visited museums. Conferences were held every day with AUC officials to discuss the site inspections or the official meetings of the day. The final report of our team included a summary of the discussions and meetings and recommendations for specific courses and a general curriculum in archaeological resource management. The courses our team felt it was most important to develop included the following:

Cultural Heritage Management—introduction to the theory and principles of cultural resource management, conservation, ethics, national legislation, procedures, and regulations;

Park Site Planning—long and short-range planning strategies and effective site use and development;



The mosque of Ahmed Ibn Tulun in Islamic Cairo; 9th century A.D. Photo by Ernest Allen Connally (1963).



The temple of Ammon, Luxor; 13th century B.C. Photo by Ernest Allen Connally (1963).

Park Site Management—survey of all components of site management, including research, facility design, visitor uses, education, maintenance, resource protection, public relations, and administration;

Archeological Method and Technique—fundamentals of archeological survey, excavation methods, field reporting and documentation, site and museum conservation, stabilization, and interpretation;

Park Site Interpretation and Education—overview of principles and techniques, visitor contact, site interpretation, including formal and informal interpretation techniques, publications, interpretive media, identifying and understanding the visitor, and channels of communication;

Tourism and Economics—the role of tourism in cultural site preservation, understanding the principles, techniques, and terminology of the tourism industry, and tourism economics;

Cultural Site Law Enforcement—the theory and practice of law enforcement at cultural sites, knowledge of laws and regulations, the interface of different law enforcement entities on a site, relations with the public, guides, and other agencies;

Facility Design and Management—principles and applications of facility design, construction, and maintenance;

Public Relations and Heritage Education—strategies and techniques for dealing with the print and electronic media to communicate the site's message to the local as well as the touring public;

Methods and Techniques of Site Documentation—an overview of standards, methods, and techniques for documentation of sites, structures, and objects, and of the uses of site monitoring systems;

Conservation and Stabilization—survey of current procedures, methods, and techniques of conservation of earthen, mud-brick, and stone structures and objects;

Exhibition Design—techniques for planning and designing effective site and museum interpretive exhibitions through the use of various media; and

Collection Management—the philosophy, methods, and techniques of artifacts registration, control, conservation, preservation, documentation, storage, access, and retrieval.

The specific impact of this project cannot be measured until AUC develops and implements archeological



The stepped pyramid of Zoser, Saqqara, was built 2778 B.C. in the form of a mastaba and subsequently enlarged. Photo by Ernest Allen Connally (1963).

resource management workshops, courses, or training. It is anticipated that some short-term programs can be developed soon, and eventually a formal graduate program in cultural or archeological resource management might be established. A model program at AUC, as envisioned by our team would include: (1) a B.A. degree with cultural resource management emphasis; (2) a M.A. with an emphasis in site management and a thesis topic on archeology or Egyptology; and (3) a training institute for EAO inspectors and other officials to provide advanced

professional courses and courses that covered particular skills. Such an overall program would substantially improve the management and protection of Egyptian sites and monuments. Better management would reduce some of the negative impacts that urbanization, modern development, and tourism are causing.

Note

✧ Since the visit of the US team in May 1992, Egypt's tourism industry has been crippled by Muslim fundamentalists attacks on foreign visitors. The Egyptian government estimates that tourism revenues were curtailed by as much as \$70 million in 1993. —JP

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The "Colossi of Memnon" at the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III, Thebes; 14th century B.C. Photo by Ernest Allen Connally (1963).